

Washington, DC – An amendment offered by Rep. Mike Honda (CA-15) to improve global warming and climate science education was adopted late Wednesday night, May 2, 2007, in the House of Representatives during debate on the National Science Foundation (NSF) Authorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 1867). The amendment is the first direct vote on global warming in the House of Representatives, and will likely serve as a bellwether for future policy development on the issue.

The Honda amendment will allow the National Science Foundation to support activities to develop vitally needed formal and informal educational materials to improve the understanding of global warming and encourage broad public efforts to reduce the threat posed by climate change. These materials will include a K-12 curriculum, exhibits, and audiovisual materials. Climate science is a subject that is often inadequately addressed in K-12 science curricula.

“Most of the time, people can go about their everyday lives without understanding complex scientific concepts, suffering no ill effects,” Honda said. “But global warming presents a new kind of problem; and the understanding of this phenomenon will play a significant role in our ability to actually address it. We don’t have much time. Nearly every point on the globe is getting warmer, and the debate is no longer if, but when these changes will occur. We can turn the tide of global warming, but only if we arm ourselves with the necessary knowledge.”

The amendment was adopted by a 252-165 vote, with 27 Republicans joining Democrats, despite a procedural attempt by some Republicans to include language requiring the educational materials to reflect “the diversity of opinion” about the role of human activities on global warming – this notwithstanding overwhelming scientific consensus as to the real threats posed by climate change and global warming. The Honda Amendment was included in the final NSF bill, which passed the House by an overwhelming majority: 399 – 17.